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Letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, annexed hereto, a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Anna Lindh, on the outcome of the Regional European Union Conference on Conflict Prevention "Partners in Prevention", which was held in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29 and 30 August 2002.

I would be grateful if the letter and the enclosed conclusions of the Chairman could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 22, "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**

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Annex to the letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden addressed to the Secretary-General

In response to your call, at the fourth High-Level Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, to arrange regional workshops in order to discuss specific regional dimensions of cooperation in conflict prevention and peace-building, the Regional European Union Conference on Conflict Prevention "Partners in Prevention" was held in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29 and 30 August 2002.

The Conference brought together key actors from the European Union and from international organizations involved in conflict prevention in Europe. Participants included high officials from European Union institutions as well as from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Foreign ministers from several European Union and candidate countries participated. High officials from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Southern African Development Community also attended the Conference. Persons with practical experience of conflict prevention in the field served as moderators and panellists.

I have the honour to forward to you hereby, Mr. Secretary-General, the conclusions of the Chairman of the Conference.

It is our hope that the conclusions will contribute to future high-level meetings held between the United Nations and regional organizations. We also hope that the results of the Conference will stimulate increased interaction between the United Nations in different regions, and lead to similar meetings in other regions.

(*Signed*) Anna **Lindh**

Enclosure

Conclusions of the Chairman of the Regional European Union Conference on Conflict Prevention "Partners in Prevention", held in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29 and 30 August 2002

The Helsingborg Agenda

The European Council in Göteborg endorsed the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, whereby the EU will:
- set clear political priorities for preventive actions,
- improve its early warning, action and policy coherence,
- enhance its instruments for long- and short-term prevention, and
- build effective partnerships for prevention.

In order to further the goal of an increased co-operation and effective partnerships, the Regional EU Conference on Conflict Prevention *"Partners in Prevention"* was held in Helsingborg, Sweden, on 29-30 August 2002.

The Conference was arranged by the Swedish Government in close co-operation with the former Spanish and present Danish EU Chairmanships and with support from the European Commission.

The Conference responded to the call from the UN Secretary-General to arrange regional workshops in order to discuss specific regional dimensions of co-operation in conflict prevention.

The Conference brought together key actors from the EU and from international organisations involved in conflict prevention in Europe. Participants included high officials from EU institutions as well as from the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO. Foreign ministers from several EU and candidate countries participated. Persons with practical experience from conflict prevention in the field served as moderators and panellists. High officials from the African Union, ECOWAS and SADC also attended the Conference.

The Conference was the first meeting of senior representatives from all European regional organisations and the UN to review in an informal way their joint work and the collective challenges which lie ahead. Participants stressed their determination to build stronger partnerships for multilateral action.

Participants reviewed and reaffirmed their common commitment to translating the conflict prevention agenda into concrete action. The Chairman of the Conference, Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, drew the following conclusions from the discussions. These conclusions will be transmitted to the EU Presidency for further consideration.

Common Values

1. Conflict prevention is one of the primary obligations of UN Member States set forth in the UN Charter. The Charter provides the foundation for a comprehensive and long-term approach to conflict prevention based on an expanded concept of peace and security, in which the human being is placed at the centre.

2. International law including norms on human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as the global and regional institutions to safeguard these norms, lay the foundation for international peace and security. Violent conflicts have often resulted from flagrant violations of common norms and commitments.

3. States are accountable to their inhabitants and responsible to each other for the implementation of commonly agreed international norms. Common commitments, undertaken at regional and global levels, are matters of immediate and legitimate concern to all.

4. Conflict prevention and sustainable and equitable development are mutually reinforcing activities. Investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention is investment in sustainable development.

Common Action

5. Too often, the international community has failed to prevent violent conflicts. Complex challenges in recent years have led to a closer co-operation between the EU and regional and international organisations. This has made efforts to prevent violent conflicts more effective. The international community is faced with urgent challenges to the maintenance of peace and long-term security. Addressing these challenges will require intensified co-operation and a resolve to accelerate and intensify joint work.

6. Co-operation and partnership have been intensified between our organisations. Joint lessons should be drawn from experiences gained from our previous actions. For example:
i) common forward-looking exercises based on lessons learned, including on policy coherence, for instance with regard to our activities in FYROM,
ii) the need for a consistent political message and strengthened co-operation between envoys and special representatives,
iii) sharing of manuals for conflict prevention,
iv) experience gained from the institution of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,
v) experience of supporting and engaging local and national efforts for conflict prevention, with civil society playing an important role,
vi) experience from consolidating peace through co-operation on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration,
vii) experience from co-operation on long-term peace-building in post-conflict situations.

Common Commitment

7. In order to translate our common commitment to conflict prevention into co-operative action, practical institution-strengthening and process measures should be taken aimed at improving the capacity to:
i) analyse situations requiring preventive action,
ii) identify appropriate policy responses, and
iii) agree upon and effectively deliver such responses.

8. To this end, practical measures should be taken, both at headquarters and field levels, aiming at:
i) increased transparency and substantive exchange of relevant information among partner organisations,
ii) co-operation between situation rooms, including for early warning on potential conflict situations,
iii) development of common indicators and check lists for root-causes of conflicts, including the role of democracy, human rights and the rule of law,
iv) joint fact-finding and development of shared strategies, i.a. through country teams, drawing on local and non-governmental actors, for instance with regard to Central Asia and southern Caucasus,

v) co-operation in defining goals and strategies in specific situations, including through the establishment of ad hoc working groups,
vi) sharing of experiences on conflict prevention between organisations in different regions,
vii) sharing of experiences on how to strengthen conflict prevention in development co-operation, including through institution-building,
viii) development of joint training programmes for conflict prevention.

Follow-up

9. The Conference will be followed up and reviewed by the EU, in its continuing implementation of the Göteborg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, and by the participating organisations, both at headquarters and in the field, including at working level.

10. An enlarged European Union will benefit from the expertise and new perspectives offered by the new member states. European security will be enhanced with these new member states playing an active role in the implementation of the Göteborg Programme.

11. The chairman's conclusions will be forwarded to the UN Secretary-General and will contribute to the next high-level meetings between the UN and regional organisations, which i.a. will review progress. In this context, the conclusions of the Conference will be forwarded to all regional organisations participating at the next high-level meeting.

12. Our common hope is that the results of this Conference will stimulate an increased interaction between the United Nations and organisations in different regions and will lead to similar meetings in other regions.

13. Our common ambition is also to enhance our co-operation with NGOs, civil society, the business community and research institutions in the implementation of the conflict prevention agenda.